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Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7850th meeting

Friday, 23 December 2016, 9.30 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi	(Spain)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Martins
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Suárez Moreno

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

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The meeting was called to order at 9.35 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of South Sudan to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2016/1085, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the the United States of America.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

France, New Zealand, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay

Abstaining:

Angola, China, Egypt, Japan, Malaysia, Russian Federation, Senegal, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The draft resolution received seven votes in favour, with eight abstentions The draft resolution has not been adopted, having failed to obtain the required number of votes.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Ms. Power (United States of America): This should not have been a contentions draft resolution (S/2016/1085). The United States proposed a draft resolution meant to show that the architects of mass atrocities and those who defy the demands of the Security Council day in and day would face consequences. We urged members of the Council to stand with South Sudan's people, who are suffering immesely due to the actions of their leaders. And we urged that we use an arms embargo and targeted sanctions to help end the culture of impunity and reduce — at least — the violence. We are grateful to those who supported this effort.

Some Council members decided to prevent the Council from acting, from heeding the pleas of the Secretary-General, who has been appealing for these steps for more than a year. History is going to be a very hard judge of their decision. The atrocities in South Sudan and the displacement into neighbouring countries are increasing every day. A number of false arguments have been made in recent days, and I would just like to address them head-on.

Some have said that this draft resolution should have imposed either an arms embargo or targeted sanctions, but not both. They argued that putting both the arms embargo and the designations into the same draft resolution was costing us votes and that we might be able to get the draft resolution adopted if we just submitted a clean arms embargo or clean designations. That is just false. We told every abstaining country — all eight abstainers on the arms embargo and the designations — that we were completely open to doing a clearn arms embargo or clean designations to try to get at the culture of impunity and the leading architects of theviolence. In response, we were told that a change of that nature would not earn us a single vote. We engaged every member who abstained in the voting. Let nobody say, in retrospect, "Had only the Americans put forward half of what they included in that draft resolution, we would have been fine". That is false.

Secondly, some have said — and this is a memorable quote for me — "We need actions not sanctions". That is an exact quote. But the representative who said that and all the other abstainers proposed no actions. Not one of them came forward despite repeated pleas from me personally and everybody who is part of the United States Mission and is working on this issue. No one came forward to say, "Okay, do not do this, but let us do this instead. Here is an idea. Here is something that we can rally behind". Instead what the abstainers have rallied behind is treading water, and it does in fact constitute the definition of insanity, which is to do the same thing over and over again and expect a different result.

The road to how we got here, I believe, illustrates that. After another serious outbreak of violence in July, the Security Council made a set of demands (see S/PV.7730). We demanded unfettered access for all people in South Sudan. Some 1,830,000 people are

internally displaced in South Sudan, and approximately 4.8 million people — more than half the country — are severely food insecure. When we made those demands, and the Government of South Sudan failed to comply. We demanded that the Government of South Sudan stop blocking peacekeepers from the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) from carrying out their mandate. We saw in person and heard from contingent commanders and troops that they needed written permission 48 hours in advance to be able to move in convoys to protect people, even though they had a civilian-protection mandate. We therefore demanded that the movement be improved and increased with freedom of movement. The Government of South Sudan failed to comply.

We authorized the immediate deployment of a new UNMISS regional protection force to help improve security around the capital. The Government failed to comply. The situation then grew worse on our watch, and we regularly received briefings from United Nations folks who were doing their best to sound the alarm. We heard on television, radio and online sources a dramatic increase in vile rhetoric wherein people were inciting ethnic tensions, as Government officials did little to stop it, despite muzzling the media in a whole series of other respects. Soldiers began preparing in very overt ways for large-scale attacks, including, at least, 4,000 militia recently staged in the Equatorias.

The Secretary-General, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Head of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan and the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide all issued their warnings. They came here, and the lights flashed red — not yellow and certainly not green. It does not happen in the Security Council very often when a string of United Nations officials comes and describes the gravity of what lies ahead. The Secretary-General used his last appearance here (see S/PV.7846) on the subject of South Sudan to appeal to us to take heed of his warning and that of all of his team. Three thousand people on average have fled South Sudan into Uganda every single day this month. Is that because the situation is getting better or is stable? With 3,000 people fleeing every day and fearing for their lives, that is why we felt that we had to bring this draft resolution to a vote. It has been hanging around. We have tried to solicit textual input and changes and said that we are flexible while, again, we heard nothing in reply.

Had it been adopted, this draft resolution would not have been a panacea. We are not naive. It would have not solved the underlying political crisis at the heart of what has divided South Sudan, but the arms embargo would have had some significant effects. It would have made it impossible for the Government of South Sudan to continue to use the precious resources at its disposal to buy heavy weapons armaments. Would their have been smuggling — an issue I heard raised by a lot of Council members? Of course, there would have been smuggling, but we would have significantly reduced arms sales by United Nations Member States to a fellow United Nations Member State that, instead of feeding its people, is amping and arming up for a conflict that is becoming increasingly ethnic in nature.

The individual sanctions targeted three individuals Paul Malong, Riek Machar and Michael Makuei with asset freezes and travel bans. People asked what good would asset freezes and travel bans really do? Those are three leaders with lengthy résumés for fuelling violence. They have stoked ethnic conflicts, unleashed violence against civilians and, especially in the cases of Mr. Malong and Mr. Makuei, attempted to portray UNMISS as a party to the conflict. Members of the Council have all seen the rhetoric. Many of them have soldiers who are on the ground in South Sudan. Those soldiers are more vulnerable because of the threats and the caricatures that those individuals have put out concerning UNMISS, while conveying that the Mission is just a tool of the opposition. That is a vulnerability for all of our people who are present on the ground whether they be aid workers, diplomats, private citizens or peacekeepers.

The adoption of the draft resolution would have shown that, at least when it came to the people who were doing the most to stoke the atrocities and the violence, there would have been costs. Would the designations have changed the world? The answer is no, but does sending a signal and message of impunity — as we have doing every day that we have not voted on those designations, even though we know the record of the individuals involved — do so? A record of impunity and that inability to impose a cost as a Council is a green light, and that is a green light with which everyone who abstained in the voting of this draft resolution is going to have to live.

What is the alternative? I know people on the Council care a lot about South Sudan. Many of us travelled together to the region a couple of times over

the past year. Is the alternative just to trust that South Sudan's leaders are going to change course? There are some really principled people in the South Sudanese Government, and they are outnumbered or outranked. There are such individuals. We all talked to them. We know that there are people of good will who would like to change course, but, unfortunately, not least because of the actions of two of the people whom we designated in the Government, that has proven to be something that the Government is not prepared to do. Do we just then sit on our hands until the Government calls off the militia and stop some of the most significant sexual violence that he have seen in any conflict in our life times?

The Council members who did not support this draft resolution are taking a big gamble that South Sudan's leaders will not instigate a catastrophe. If those Council members are wrong — and every report that we have heard in this Chamber suggests that they are — it is the people of South Sudan who will pay an unbearable price. It was not an easy decision for us to propose this draft resolution. We debated it deep into the night because having a draft resolution that is not adopted, of course, is not how one wants to spend one's day. I believe that the South Sudanese people were watching for the outcome of this vote, and we knew the signal that this would send. At a certain point, drifting along and internalizing the constraints imposed by those Council members who do not want to take action in the face of the violence, that is not an option. We learned that from Rwanda, Srebrenica and chapters past.

The next time that soldiers and armed groups fire on civilians, the next time that the Government prevents peacekeepers from going on patrol, which has probably already happened during the time that I have been speaking, and the next time that a village goes hungry because the Government withholds permission for an aid delivery, each of us will need to find a way to justify our response. The leaders of South Sudan should not misinterpret this vote. All of us will be watching closely what happens on the ground. The abuses will continue to be publicized. We will continue to hear appeals from the United Nations about what it feels it needs in order to reduce violence on the ground. We will continue to be relentless in demanding accountability, and we will be ready to return to the Council to vote again on the proposed arms embargo and targeted sanctions as soon as those who did not support action today come to understand the human costs of imposing no cost for attacking civilians, for importing massive amounts of arms instead of feeding one's people and for not pursuing the cause of peace.

All of us have the opportunity to make an explanation of vote today. I would be very grateful to those who abstained in the voting to clarify what it will take and what they are for that we have not already tried.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): Three years ago, almost to the day, the conflict in South Sudan began. In those three years, civilians have been the target of unspeakable violence and abuse, amply documented by the United Nations, the African Union and civil society organizations. The situation in South Sudan continues to be one of the worst in the world. The humanitarian consequences are tragic and the needs of the population are staggering. The security situation remains very volatile and, over the past weeks, the Security Council has considered the risks of retaliation and intensification, as well as violence and mass atrocities. The special session of the Human Rights Council, held last week in Geneva, underscored our collective concern over the grim state of affairs.

In that context, France deeply regrets that the draft resolution submitted by the United States could not garner the necessary support in the Council to be adopted. As is well-known and as we have expressed on several occasions in this Chamber, France has long supported an arms embargo on South Sudan. We regret that it was not proposed earlier, when it could have enjoyed broad support from the Council. In our eyes, such a measure is fully warranted by the imperative of protecting civilians. The steady inflow of arms into South Sudan fuels violence by creating the illusion that a military solution to the conflict is possible. In the hands of the enemies of peace, those weapons facilitate the commission of the worst abuses against civilians. It is the responsibility of the Council to do all that it can to reduce that risk and the arms embargo would surely have helped.

The embargo could have also helped the political process by changing the equation for those who favour a military solution. It could have been a push for peace. Its contribution to reducing violence could have brought about a favourable environment and conciliatory political dialogue. As the Council has affirmed repeatedly, a lasting solution to the violence in South Sudan can only be political and an embargo could have helped.

A few days ago, the Council unanimously renewed the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (see PV.7840). As the population of South Sudan is at the mercy of violence and abuse, we hope that the Council will once again unanimously decide to come to their aid. Let us be aware of our shared responsibility to prevent a new cycle of mass atrocities in South Sudan, as the Secretary-General has warned us about, and to bring about a positive dynamic. Today's vote only highlights the need for the Council to remain mobilized to work for peace and security in South Sudan.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): Today, the Security Council had a chance to show that we would no longer tolerate business as usual in South Sudan. Tragically, for the people of South Sudan, we have been unable to do so. For a long time it has been clear to many of us in the Chamber that a different approach was needed, that different pressure needed to be brought to bear. Despite repeated promises, repeated atrocities, repeated warnings of ethnic violence, the fighting has continued to rage and the fragile peace agreement has continued to sour.

That is why the United Kingdom has long advocated for an arms embargo on South Sudan. Today, we had a chance to curb the flow of weapons and to save lives. It is why we advocated targeting those individuals who have fuelled the violence — individuals at the top of both the Government and the opposition. We had a chance today to show those individuals that there are very real repercussions for their role in that war. But instead, we have done nothing. We have done nothing despite knowing what is really at stake. We can all recall Adama Dieng's grave warning to this Council just two weeks ago. He spoke of hateful rhetoric, of ethnic divides. He spoke of possible genocide. If the dire situation in South Sudan spirals into that tragic place, we will all need to examine our consciences.

And Adama's warning was just the tip of the iceberg. We should not forget that atrocities have already been committed in South Sudan. Sites established for the protection of civilians have instead been the scenes of murder, robbery and rape. Millions have uprooted their lives and fled their homes. Families have been destroyed and tens of thousands have been killed in a country that went from one civil war to another. We have done nothing to reduce the number of weapons at the disposal of those who would choose to commit those unspeakable acts. We have welcomed the repeated promises and offers of the Government and the opposition to stop fighting and to work towards a political process. We welcomed the Government's announcements to conduct an inclusive national dialogue and we welcomed their commitment to the deployment of a regional protection force.

But the reality does not reflect kindly on those promises. In reality, the United Nations Mission continues to face chronic restrictions. In reality, the humanitarian situation has gotten worse, not better and people are suffering. In reality, they are voting with their feet. Up to 6,000 people per day fled for Uganda this month.

That is the reality that we needed to change. Words are not good enough. We must now see concrete action resulting from those promises. Today we had a chance to take a small step towards changing this reality, and yet we have been failed to do so. Inaction today does not abscond us all of our responsibilities. In fact, it places an even heavier burden on us. The Security Council, the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and all parties to the conflict in South Sudan have a responsibility to redouble our efforts for peace in the year ahead. The people of South Sudan have asked for it for long enough.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China has followed closely the situation in South Sudan. My country is committed to expeditiously restoring peace and stability to South Sudan so that the people there can enjoy peace dividends as soon as possible. Recently President Salva Kiir announced the launching of a national dialogue and the unconditional acceptance of the deployment of the Regional Protection Force.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) held a summit on South Sudan and issued a communiqué. The international community should seize this opportunity to push for various bodies in South Sudan to continue with the implementation of a peace agreement in order to return to the track of finding a political solution. The leading role of IGAD in mediating the South Sudan issue should be supported so that peace, stability and development can be realized as soon as possible.

We hold that there should be prudent action with respect to sanctions and we believe that sanctions should serve the interest of an overall political solution. We are not in favour of using sanctions to exert pressure on developing countries. The transitional Government of South Sudan has demonstrated the political will to implement relevant Council resolution

and joint communiqués. The IGAD communiqué does not support the imposition of an embargo or sanctions. The legitimate aspirations of IGAD and African countries must be fully respected. Council actions should be conducive to the political solution of the South Sudanese issue, helpful to the work of the mediation and good offices of IGAD and the African Union and must contribute to maintaining the unity of the Council. There needs to be prudent action with respect to embargoes and designations in order to avoid complicating the situation even further in South Sudan.

China has consistently supported the peace process and provided active assistance to South Sudan in its nation-building and stability. Recently, theSpecial Representative of the Chinese Government on African Affairs visited South Sudan and the region to encourage the relevant actors to engage with one another in peace negotiations. China is willing to work with the international community to continue with its constructive role in efforts towards enduring peace and stability in South Sudan.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Russia, likw many other delegations, abstained in the voting on the Security Council draft resolution on expanding the sanctions regime against South Sudan. That is because there are profound concerns about the content of the document and the work conducted on it. We think that it is abnormal when serious work on settling the situation in the South Sudan is undermined by the senseless use of such sanctions. But that is typical of the sort of geopolitical engineering that the Western countries have been using against South Sudan and other countries. In the past, it was used against the united Sudan in order to dismember it into two States.

We have a question for the delegation of the United States. How does that delegation assess United States activities on this issue? Having been unsuccessful in South Sudan, the United States is now attempting to use the Security Council for its own purposes, including through the pointless expansion of sanctions. We do not want to share the responsibility for the disastrous consequences of such a short-sighted policy. We are also against the high-handed, unceremonious conduct of the sponsors of the resolution. By putting it to a vote, they have not just ignored the opinion of a number of Council delegations, they have also disregarded the decisions of regional players, which have stated that new Security Council restrictions were counterproductive for the peace settlement process. They were also not bothered by the legitimate concerns of South Sudan's troop- and police-contributing countries, which quite rightly have misgivings about the negative impact of new sanctions on relations between the host country and the Blue Helmets.

The sponsors do not want to acknowledge the progress and cooperation achieved between Juba and the United Nations. President Kiir has categorically agreed to receive the Regional Protection Force. There has been serious progress in the peace settlement process, including the successful work of the Transitional Government of National Unity and its practical steps to launch inclusive, national dialogue and an amnesty for Machar's supporters. Once again, the sponsors of the draft resolution closed their eyes to all of that.

We would also like to point out the inconsistency in the American delegation's interpretation of the priorities of United Nations peacekeeping. At the Security Council meeting on 20 November 2015 on the future of United Nations peace operations, which included a discussion of the report of the Secretary-General on the outcomes of the United Nations peacekeeping review (S/2015/682), the representative of the United States stated that,

> "We agree with the Secretary-General that political settlements that promote peaceful and inclusive societies and help advance human rights are key to preventing conflict and interrupting cycles of violence. We have a vested interest in ensuring that, in those places where we have deployed peacekeeping missions, we are equally engaged in advancing the political process" (*S/PV.7564, p.12*).

It is doubtful that sanctioning the leaders of South Sudan and of the opposition would facilitate the building of a more inclusive society or the forging a political process. On the contrary, such steps would only exacerbate the animosity between the various ethnic groups and the escalation of tension. We would also like to point out that in resolution 2327 (2016), which extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, the sponsors defined the Mission's task to facilitate the political process as being the last priority. They did not heed the proposal of a number of delegations to make it at least a second priority.

In sum therefore, we would like to express our satisfaction about the responsible position taken by a large number of Security Council members not to allow today's destructive draft resolution on South Sudan

to be adopted. In so doing, we managed to prevent the emergence of new problems in the settlement process and in relations between the host country, the peacekeeping Mission and the international community as a whole.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): The issue of the arms embargo in South Sudan has been the subject of intense debate in recent months. While it is a matter of urgency, some delegations continuously advocate second-chance diplomacy. Ukraine is all in favour of using diplomacy as the primary path towards the resolution of the conflict in South Sudan. However, we have a couple of simple questions. How many more second chances should the parties in South Sudan be given to stop the deliberate killing of civilians, the rape of women and girls, and the incitement to ethnic violence? How many more towns and villages must be burnt before the Council reaches a consensus on further action?

South Sudan is on the verge of chaos. The conflict has touched almost every South Sudanese family, ruining hopes for a peaceful future. To give just one example — the town of Yei in the south-west was once considered one of the safest places in South Sudan, but not any more. Once bustling streets are now deserted, schools and hospitals closed, and stores and markets looted. Government soldiers patrol neighbourhoods with Kalashnikovs in their hands. No-go zones are controlled by rebels. More than half of the town's population has fled, and those who remain live in a fear of being murdered, raped, arrested or disappeared.

Is that something that the international community chooses to tolerate in the twenty-first century? Are we ready to ignore yet another looming human tragedy that, if not stopped, can lead to irreparable consequences. The answer is obvious. We must not let the South Sudanese people share the grief of Srebrenica, Rwanda or Aleppo.

With that in mind, Ukraine voted in favour of the resolution. We are fully conscious that it does not represent a solution in itself. However, we are convinced that the arms embargo and additional targeted sanctions would reduce the ability of the parties to continue fuelling the conflict in South Sudan. It would help to silence the already procured military equipment and stop the spending of desperately needed financial resources on new weaponry. The arms embargo is not a punishment, but a prerequisite and a tool for peace. We regret that the Council was not able to use it.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): Japan shares the deep concern regarding the ongoing violence and the serious humanitarian situation in South Sudan. It should be noted, however, that there has been some progress since late November, most notably the 25 November decision by the Council of Ministers of the Transitional Government, which consented to the full and immediate deployment of the Regional Protection Force, and President Kiir's 14 December speech to the Parliament on an inclusive national dialogue. We are encouraged by the demonstration of political will by the President.

Such commitments would be meaningless if their implementation were delayed, and, in that case, it is the South Sudanese people who would suffer. What is absolutely necessary is for the Transitional Government to swiftly translate those commitments into concrete actions in order to prevent large-scale violence and for it to cooperate fully with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, including by expediting the deployment of the Regional Protection Force.

Japan believes that it would be counterproductive to introduce additional sanctions measures at a time when the Transitional Government is making some positive moves. The Council must continue to engage with the Transitional Government. Japan believes that there is still room for diplomatic efforts aimed at urging the Transitional Government to make further progress. All the parties and actors can play a significant role, individually or collectively.

Our Prime Minister's special envoy visited Juba just this week to urge action by the South Sudanese leadership, including President Kiir, on those issues. We will continue to make such efforts. Japan remains strongly committed to the well-being of the people of South Sudan and to the country's long-term development. Japan will continue to contribute to South Sudan's peace and security.

Concrete actions on the part of the Transitional Government are key. The international community, including the Security Council, will closely monitor the situation on the ground. We should also recall resolution 2327 (2016), including paragraph 10, which the Council adopted unanimously. Japan decided to abstain on today's draft resolution for the aforementioned reasons. Japan's abstention today should not be interpreted as an endorsement of the status quo or an attitude of wait-and-see. The Council should remain seized of the matter.

Mr. Ibrahim (Malaysia): Just a week ago, we all were here in the Council Chamber, having just unanimously adopted resolution 2327 (2016). The unanimous adoption of that resolution demonstrated the Council's strong support for the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and our resolve on South Sudan. They were tedious negotiations, but our collective desire to find consensus prevailed. Our collective aim was to support the Transitional Government of National Unity of South Sudan towards restoring lasting peace and stability in the country.

The Council is strongest when it speaks in one voice. After the unanimous adoption of resolution 2327 (2016), we would have hoped for more concerted efforts by all Council members to support the full implementation of the resolution.

Malaysia commends the leadership role and solidarity shown by the regional partners, namely, the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), in mediating dialogue towards restoring peace and stability in South Sudan. These regional partners have continued to play an instrumental role by engaging the parties in the political process and pledging support to the Regional Protection Force despite the challenging circumstances.

In this context, IGAD had clearly stated that dialogue, reconciliation and commitment by all South Sudanese parties to implement the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan are required for permanent peace and stability in South Sudan. It is unfortunate that the perspective and positions of IGAD, as well as those of the partners and countries in the region, have not been taken on board.

Furthermore, we are appreciative of the South Sudanese Government's ongoing efforts and its decision to fully and unconditionally implement resolution 2304 (2016) and its joint communiqué with the Security Council, as well as the recent announcements by President Kiir to convene an inclusive national dialogue. These are positive developments. It would have been better and more productive if the Council had seized these opportunities and devoted more time and energy to working with the South Sudanese parties towards realizing these commitments.

Malaysia believes that united Council resolutions could be built upon to ensure greater success on South Sudan. This is, sadly, glaringly lacking today. It is therefore with much regret that Malaysia was compelled to abstain today. Having followed the developments in South Sudan closely, we believe that it is ever more important for Council members to remain united in charting a comprehensive and effective strategy to support the efforts of the South Sudanese authorities and to implement the peace agreement, protect civilians and restore peace and stability in the country.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation deplores the fact that the Council has once again failed to reach a united position concerning a key question that falls under the mandate of the Security Council to on the maintenance of international peace and security.

Less than a week ago, we managed to adopt unanimously resolution 2327 (2016), which dealt with the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan following very difficult negotiations. The Council sent an important message to the parties to the conflict, and we deemed that an important step in order to put an end to the attacks that have been ongoing for more than three years now.

Certain countries are asking that the Council be united, but these same countries are hardly willing to take into account the considerations and concerns expressed by other countries, including the countries in the region, which are the ones that are most concerned and are in the best position to assess the very delicate situation in the region.

The presidents of the countries members of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) also refused the sanctions on the basis of the fact that sanctions would not contribute to a solution.

The resort to threats such as those contained in the draft resolution submitted today (S/2016/1085) has already proved to be ineffective in putting an end to crises in the Sudan and elsewhere. Such measures will not change reality at all and certainly not contribute to improving the situation of civilians in South Sudan. But this is an easy solution, and some prefer such solutions to genuine efforts that could strengthen dialogue and help to resolve the crisis. Some prefer such solutions to efforts to address the causes of conflicts in order to resolve them; they prefer them to efforts at comprehensive reconciliation and the creation of a national identity that would unite all the people of South Sudan.

Our abstention does not mean that we implicitly approve of the abuses committed in South Sudan, nor does not mean that we are unaware of the scope of the humanitarian crisis. We are perfectly aware of the scope of the crisis, and we are working to put an end to it. We call upon all of the parties in South Sudan to assume their full responsibility to alleviate the suffering of their fellow citizens, and we call upon them to fulfill the aspirations that accompanied the emergence of their young country.

I should like to reiterate here that the patience of the international community and the understanding shown by some regional parties vis-à-vis the specificities of the situation in South Sudan should in no way be viewed as consent in connection with the deaths of innocent people and human rights violations.

Mr. Suárez Moreno (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): After considering the draft resolution (S/2016/1085), our delegation decided to abstain, without prejudice to the fact that we believe that the current situation in South Sudan requires urgent, decisive, coordinated and consensual action on the part of the Security Council in order to tackle the situation effectively and comprehensively, so as to help to stabilize the situation and achieve a lasting peace and to ensure the socioeconomic development of the brotherly people of South Sudan.

However, with respect to sanctions, everyone is aware of our delegation's principled position. In that respect, I would like to reiterate that Venezuela considers such measures as a tool and not as an end in themselves. Such instruments can have a positive impact only if they are intrinsically linked to a clearly defined political strategy.

In the case of South Sudan, our delegation believes that such a strategy does not exist, as was pointed out by the Secretary-General in one of his most recent reports. We therefore believe that not only should we pool our efforts in order to revitalize the political process in the country, but we must also move forward in drawing up a clear political strategy in order to tackle comprehensively the conflict that has ravaged the country for the past three years, in close coordination with the country and other organizations in the region.

We also agree with the unanimous position of the countries of the region in their recognition of the need to prevent the situation on the ground from escalating. In our opinion, had we adopted this draft resolution, we would have run the risk of, inter alia, moving in that direction. Without a negotiating process being held, a proposal was made to target one of the main parties to the peace agreement, which serves as a framework for the resolution of the crisis in South Sudan, as was expressed by the Security Council in the press communiqué issued on 18 November and in the recently adopted resolution 2327 (2016) renewing the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan. It is very unlikely that we would call for the full implementation of the agreement and at the same time wish to impose specific sanctions on one of the signatories. There is no link between sanctions and the political strategy to resolve the crisis.

The same applies with the attempt to impose an arms embargo on South Sudan. Even though we concur that there is a significant flow of illicit arms into the country, many of those weapons have been there since the beginning of the conflict. We believe that we should favour, among other things, the adoption of effective disarmament measures and the cantonment of troops, taking into account the transitional security provisions that are included in the peace agreement that the Security Council has underscored should serve as the basis for resolving the conflict in South Sudan. Furthermore, we have serious reservations about the overall effectiveness of an arms embargo as a tool for putting an end to the illicit flow of weapons, bearing in mind the experience in other conflict situations.

In reiterating today our position that we should promote an African solution to African problems, we endorse the unanimous position of the region on this matter that the imposition of an arms embargo or sanctions on South Sudan would not offer the solution that is sought in our efforts to achieve a lasting peace and the stability of the country. What is needed is rather a dialogue, a reconciliation and the commitment of the parties to implement the peace agreement with the support of the region and the international community.

Lastly, our delegation is convinced that our African brothers, in particular the people of South Sudan, will understand our position. We regret the fact that the spirit of unity, which should characterize the work of the Security Council, once again was not able to be achieved in this case. We hope that future discussions will assist in achieving consensual approaches that could truly have a positive impact on the situation on the ground.

Mr. Martins (Angola): Like other members, Angola abstained in the voting on draft resolution S/2016/1085, which sought to target sanctions and an arms embargo against the Government and authorities of South Sudan. Recently, the Government of South Sudan has continued to show its commitment to the implementation of the joint communiqué between the Transitional Government of National Unity and the Security Council on the deployment of the Regional Protection Force. And in our latest Council discussion on the topic, which took place on 19 December (see S/PV.7846), Angola noted with appreciation the steps taken by the Government to support the operationalization of the Force.

Angola welcomes the decision that President Kiir recently announced to launch a national inclusive dialogue. At this stage, the Council, instead of moving in the direction of applying sanctions, should continue to monitor the decisions announced and encourage the Government to move forward on that path. Several positive developments were recorded in the various states of the country, such as the approval of the deployment sites in Central Equatorial. We believe that in due time, again through dialogue, the parties, namely, the United Nations and the Government of National Unity, will agree on the necessary arrangements and agreements.

In our view, sanctions against South Sudan must not be the priority of the United Nations. Rather, the United Nations should focus in South Sudan more on supporting the political dialogue with the aim of implementing the peace agreement. That would be in line with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which underscored that an arms embargo or sanctions on South Sudan would not provide the requisite solution leading to permanent peace and stability in the country. IGAD stressed again that what is required is dialogue, reconciliation and the commitment by all the South Sudanese parties to fully implement the peace agreement. The African Union has also adopted the IGAD position. We feel that the Council should reinforce and encourage that position.

Angola is fully committed to the path of sustainable peace and stability through dialogue, which is a better way to solve conflicts, including this particular conflict in South Sudan. For that reason we abstained in the voting on the draft resolution.

Mr. Ciss (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): My delegation abstained in the voting on draft resolution S/2016/1085, not because we favour inaction or we are questioning the abuse that has been committed, but rather because, while condemning the human rights violations and other violations that are continuing to be perpetrated by all the parties in the South Sudanese conflict, we are convinced that in its quest for stability, that country needs a sustainable peace. In our opinion, such an approach requires an ongoing investment on the part of the Security Council, which we have already witnessed through the several actions that it has taken during the year, including the visit by the Council in the month of September, and the visit just made by the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015) concerning South Sudan. But we need a united approach, above all, one that is in close coordination with the organizations and countries of the subregion. I am thinking, in particular, of IGAD and its members, which have an important role to play.

In that regard, my delegation welcomes and strongly encourages the efforts of IGAD and the countries of the subregion. I am thinking in particular of the recent visit that made by President Museveni of Uganda to Juba to encourage the South Sudanese authorities to put an end to their hostilities and to focus on the political process. We also believe that, given the humanitarian urgency and the importance of protecting civilians, we have to act effectively. We are convinced that, as the Security Council, we must begin a dynamic and constructive dialogue with the Transitional Government of National Unity. We encourage it to fulfil its commitments, as soon as possible, to relaunch a national dialogue and to deploy the Regional Protection Force. But that dialogue must also be conducted with the other subregional organizations, such as IGAD and the African Union, and it should deal with the main aspects of stabilization in South Sudan, namely, the implementation of the peace agreement, security-sector reform, the protection of civilians, human rights and the provision of humanitarian assistance.

Once again, we believe that it is our responsibility to support the people of South Sudan, who are, after all, the ones who suffer most from the current situation.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Uruguay voted in favour of draft resolution S/2016/1085. We are aware of the grave humanitarian, human rights and security situation that South Sudan is experiencing as a result of a profound political crisis, and of the fact that those responsible for that crisis are the main political and military leaders. We regret that the draft

resolution put to the vote today could not garner the necessary amount of positive votes for its adoption. My delegation believes that, given the critical current situation in the country, the implementation of the measures provided for in the draft resolution would have helped to bolster political dialogue and avoid further loss of civilian lives.

As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in the Security Council on Monday, 19 December, an arms embargo "would diminish the capacity of all sides in the conflict to wage war" (*S/PV. 7846, p. 2*). Without the embargo, South Sudan would continue to be in permanent confrontation. An arms embargo would also clearly contribute to stopping the proliferation of weapons around the country, which, given the current situation of instability and insecurity, has proven to be a risk factor and an ongoing threat to the civilian population. As we have already said, the embargo would have facilitated dialogue and negotiation and, moreover, would have allowed the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan to carry out its work with more guarantees.

Uruguay reiterates that the Government has the primary responsibility for protecting its own citizens. It must provide such protection regardless of its citizens' ethnic origin or political affiliation. Therefore, the political leaders of South Sudan must act responsibly and reject any incitement of violence, while at the same time committing themselves to the path of dialogue. On that point, we urge all parties to join in a process of inclusive and transparent dialogue, with a view to achieving reconciliation and peace in the country so as to put an end to the long suffering of its inhabitants.

Mr. Van Bohemen (New Zealand): New Zealand voted in favour of today's draft resolution. For many months, New Zealand has argued that an arms embargo on South Sudan is needed as part of the international response to the continuing conflict. It is also a measure that has been strongly and repeatedly called for by the Secretary-General and the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations for over a year. We are very disappointed that the Council has failed to respond to those requests.

We recognize that an arms embargo will not resolve the conflict. However, it will go a long way towards addressing the overabundance of weapons, which are being used against civilians. It undoubtedly further fuels the conflict. We also recognize the concern expressed by some that an arms embargo and targeted sanctions would upset any political process. However, in our view, those measures would only help create the conditions for peace on the ground and would, in turn, support the political process when it gets underway. Yet, right now we are seeing a lot more fighting and killing than talking.

We have been warned by the United Nations of the possibility of much graver developments. Ignoring those warnings and preserving space for a currently non-existent dialogue seems to us to not make a lot of sense. We are concerned that what we are seeing today is another example of a country where a Council-mandated mission is operating under very difficult conditions. The country is doing just enough to satisfy the Council — doing the minimum to avoid the imposition of measures that the Council itself had forecast, but not demonstrating any meaningful commitment to changing the dangerous course upon which it has embarked. As New Zealand leaves the Council, we urge Council members not to allow differences over the draft resolution to distract from and prevent unified and effective leadership on the critical issues that face the people of South Sudan and the peacekeeping mission on the ground.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Spain.

Spain voted in favour the draft resolution, in which we proposed the establishment of an arms embargo on South Sudan. We believe that such a measure, which was requested by the Secretary-General, is absolutely necessary in order to provide a response to the security and humanitarian situation, which has been described by experts as catastrophic and unsustainable. We have been defending such measures for some time, and we regret the fact that we were not able to adopt them.

The arms embargo is a necessary measure but, unfortunately, it is not enough. There are signs that the conflict is running the grave risk of becoming an ethnic war. The Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Mr. Adama Dieng, warned us about a month ago about the risk of genocide. I would like also to reiterate that my delegation has never felt that sanctions were an end in themselves. Rather, we simply believe that sanctions would reduce violence on the ground.

Lastly, a week after the adoption of resolution 2327 (2016), in which we renewed the mandate of the United

Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), Spain would like to reiterate its appeal for the urgency of proceeding to the deployment and full implementation of the Regional Protection Force. We take note of the commitment assumed by the Transitional Government of National Unity, but we must now transition from words to actions, and we must do so immediately. It is crucial for UNMISS to be able to operate without restrictions in order to comply with its mandate, particularly with respect to the protection of civilians and the safe and unhindered distribution of humanitarian assistance.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of South Sudan.

Mr. Malok (South Sudan): At the outset, let me begin by thanking you, Mr. President, and members of the Security Council for giving me another opportunity to address the Council on this important issue of an arms embargo and targeted sanctions against my country. The reasons given for the threat of an arms embargo and sanctions were the frustration and impatience of the international community with the lack of progress in the implementation of the peace agreement.

In my previous statement to the Council, I reported on the positive efforts and actions that the Government is undertaking in order to address the many challenges that the country is facing, as well as on the implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions, including the deployment of the Regional Protection Force (see S/PV.7840). In addition, on 19 December, His Excellency Mr. Salva Kiir Mayardit, President of the Republic of South Sudan, further to his launching of a national dialogue, issued a presidential order that formed the National Dialogue Steering Committee, which is composed of varied personalities and will advise the President and the members of the Council on how to embark on the peace process. All of the recent commitments made by my President point in a more encouraging direction. Therefore, I think that the tabling of the draft resolution is unfortunate.

We were hoping that at this critical juncture, when the Transitional Government of National Unity is doing everything to implement Security Council resolutions and the deployment of the Regional Protection Force, the Security Council would engage the Government of South Sudan constructively instead of issuing threats of the imposition of an arms embargo and targeted sanctions. It is very unfortunate that individuals who are critical of the peace process were targeted and listed for sanctions by the draft resolution. That action reveals a lack of good faith and only serves to further aggravate matters and invite controversy, potential disagreement and hostility. In truth, harmony and cooperation are naturally what the situation calls for.

As we have repeatedly said, punitive measures may tend to harden positions rather than increase cooperation. We have always argued that an arms embargo seeks to further weaken the Government and strengthen the various militant and armed groups for a number of historical reasons, including the long civil war, which left arms in the hands of civilians, porous borders, which make it difficult to control the illegal in-flow of small arms and light weapons, and, as stated in the Secretary-General's report (S/2016/951), the proliferation of armed groups in the country with their own distinct agendas.

In conclusion, let me reiterate the commitment of my Government to the full implementation of the peace agreement and to working with all stakeholders, including members of the Security Council and the international community, in order to bring peace and stability to the people of South Sudan. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Security Council who engaged with us constructively.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.